

HB 2492 -- KINSHIP PLACEMENTS FOR FOSTER CARE

SPONSOR: Brown (94)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill defines the word "kin" to be a person who is not related by blood, marriage, or adoption who has a close relationship with the child or the child's family, including a godparent, neighbor, teacher, close family friend, fellow church member, or a person who has a close relationship with the child or the child's family is related to the child by blood or marriage beyond the third degree of consanguinity or affinity. The bill adds kin to the individuals for whom standards for licensure not related to safety waived for specific children in care if the standards would otherwise impede licensing of the kin's home.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the goal is to get kids out of foster care and into permanent homes. Families can take care of each other if we look hard enough into the extended family. Missouri is on the cutting edge of this issue. In Missouri, 45% of kids are placed with relatives, whereas the national average is only 25% placement with a relative. Relative placement is the silver bullet in foster care. If the relative is related beyond the third degree, he or she must meet many more regulations before he or she can receive placement of the child. Children want to be with people they know, trust, and love.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Brown; Melanie Scheetz, Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition; and Office of Child Advocate.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.